

Union's Joel Anthony is an NBA Champion

By Julian McKenzie

After a much hyped decision, a fiery introduction, and a rise from disappointment, the 2012 version of the Miami Heat finally captured an NBA title. Among those champions, which includes the Big Three of LeBron James, Chris Bosh & Dwyane Wade, include Montreal native Joel Anthony, who returned to Montreal this week.

After the 2011 NBA Finals where they were dropped in five games to the Dallas Mavericks, the Heat were able to regroup in order to reclaim the top prize over a young Oklahoma City Thunder squad in five games.

“It was humbling.” Anthony described the pain of losing the 2011 Finals. “Going through the pain of losing the finals, the opportunity. All year, guys held onto [the loss]. Since the win, Anthony has been surrounded by the craziness which comes with being an NBA champion. Along with the publicity he and his teammates received in Miami, going home to his home church of Union United, he was greeted by his fans and church family, while taking part in many photo opportunities.

“It’s been surreal.” Anthony says of the whole experience. “To finally win, it was a great win for us and for the city of Miami.”

Despite the success, Anthony is still grounded in his values. He credits his home church, Union United.

“The biggest influence was my church upbringing.” Anthony says “People see me as a laid back individual and that quiet demeanor was brought up from how I was raised. You talk about being a product of your environment and the church was my environment.”

Joel has also lent his support towards the major renovation fund for Union United Church, saying he has contributed monetarily towards the campaign while aiding his mother, Erene Anthony, the head of the church’s Official Board. The church is seeking six million through donations and major gifts for the refurbishment of their building on 3007 Delisle.

As for Anthony’s summer plans, he plans on training in Montreal and in Miami as well as traveling the world. As Canada has not qualified for the Olympics for basketball, Anthony won’t be playing organized ball during the summer.

“It’ll be the first summer since I’ve been in the NBA that I won’t be playing organized basketball. I’ll just be playing pickup games, working out. Just a normal NBA off-season.” Anthony says.

Despite the change in off-season activity, Joel Anthony will be doing all that he can to be the best he can be and help the Miami Heat to another NBA championship.